

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1632

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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US MISSION NATO 580

C O N F I D E N T I A L 2758

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJ: INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND EMBASSY CONTACTS
WITH OPPOSITION

1. IN COURTESY CALL ON MINISTER OF PRESIDENCY CARRO MARTINEZ
(WHO IS PRIME MINISTER'S RIGHT-HAND MAN) APRIL 21, I ASKED
FOR HIS COMMENTS ON PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION AND HIS
ASSESSMENT AS TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

2. CARRO SAID FIRST THAT PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS HAD HAD A
TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON SPAIN. SOME OF THESE WERE AS OBJECTIONABLE
TO SPANIARDS AS THEY PROBABLY WERE TO U.S. ONLY AFTER
REFERRING TO INFLUENCE OF PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS DID CARRO
THEN SAY THERE WOULD BE SOME PROBLEMS IN TRANSITION OF GOVT
IN SPAIN WITH FRANCO'S DEPRTURE. FRANCO'S END WAS NEAR,
HE SAID, AND IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MAKE UP IN SHORT TERM
FOR ALL-PERVASIVE INFLUENCE AND AUTHORITY OF FRANCO'S PRESTIGE
THROUGHOUT GOVT STRUCTURE. AT SAME TIME, SPAIN WAS PREPARED
TO USHER IN A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY AND PREMIER ARIAS NAVARRO
WANTED IT TO BE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO WESTERN-TYPE OF GOVTS.
IT WAS IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, FOR USG NOT TO THINK THAT IT WAS
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POSSIBLE TO DUPLICATE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AS PRACTICED IN ANGLO-

SAXON COUNTRIES OR SOME WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AMONG LATIN PEOPLES. DEMOCRATIC GOVTS PRESUPPOSED POLITICAL MATURITY WHICH WAS NOT ALWAYS PRESENT IN LATIN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING SPAIN. SPAIN, AS A SOCIETY AND FROM STANDPOINT OF INDIVIDUAL, WAS ALREADY PART AND PARCEL OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION EVEN THOUGH THIS WAS NOT TRUE IN POLITICAL SPHERE. ARIAS WAS COMMITTED TO DRAWING SPAIN AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WHICH MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY TURN OUT TO BE EXACTLY THE SAME AS PRACTICED ELSEWHERE IN THE WEST.

3. TURNING TO DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION, CARRO SAID THAT THERE WERE VARIOUS GROUPS WHICH WERE NOT PREPARED TO WORK OPENLY AND CONDUCTED THEIR ACTIVITIES ON THE MARGINS OF THE LAW. THESE PEOPLE WERE UNWILLING TO OBSERVE THE RULES OF THE GAME AS SET DOWN IN PRESENT BASIC LAWS. THEY TRIED MANY WAYS TO ENHANCE THEIR POSITION, SOMETIMES BY TURNING TO FOREIGN SUPPORT. IN MOST CASES FOLLOWERS OF THE OPPOSITION WERE OPPOSED TO THE PRESENCE OF MILITARY FACILITIES USED BY THE U.S. IN SPAIN. HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE HOPED I WOULD NOT DEAL WITH ANY OF THOSE WHO DID NOT FULLY ACCEPT THE RULES OF THE SYSTEM.

4. IN REPLY I ALLUDED TO A COMMENT MADE TO ME BY PREMIER ARIAS AT OUR FIRST MEETING THAT HE HOPED I WOULD OBSERVE AND INTERPRET ACCURATELY DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN. I SAID THAT I TOOK THIS TO MEAN THAT I HAD AN OBLIGATION TO KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN SPANISH POLITICS AND, FOR THIS REASON, I INTENDED TO HAVE AS BROAD CONTACTS AS POSSIBLE. THIS MEANT THAT I WOULD ALSO SEE THOSE IN THE OPPOSITION WHO WERE ACTIVE IN AN OPEN FASHION AND WERE PERMITTED TO CARRY OUT THEIR ACTIVITIES IN FULL FREEDOM. I TOLD THE MINISTER THAT I HAD NO INTENTION OF PERMITTING MYSELF TO BE USED BY OPPOSITION ELEMENTS TO ENHANCE THEIR POSITION OR OF DEALING WITH ANY WHO CLEARLY WERE OUTLAWED. I DID WANT THE GOS TO UNDERSTAND MY POINT THAT SUCH DISCUSSIONS AS I MIGHT HAVE WERE IN THE INTERESTS OF KEEPING MY GOVT FULLY INFORMED AND WERE NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS DIRECTED IN ANY WAY AGAINST THE GOS. CARRO SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD MY POSITION, ADDING HIS HOPE THAT I MIGHT CONVINCE SOME OF THESE ELEMENTS TO PLAY THE GAME MORE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES.

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